Numb. 21

The TATLER.

By *Iſaac Bickerſtaff* Eſq;

Quicquid agunt Homines noſtri Farrago Libelli.

From *Thurſday May* 26. to *Saturday May* 28. 1709.

White's Chocolate-Houſe, May 26.

A Gentleman has writ to me out of the Country a very civil Letter, and ſaid Things which I ſuppreſs with great Violence to my Vanity. There are many Terms in my Narratives which he complains want explaining, and has therefore deſir'd, that, for the Benefit of my Country Readers, I would let him know what I mean by a *Gentleman*, a *Pretty Fellow*, a *Toaſt*, a *Coquet*, a *Critick*, a *Wit*, and all other Appellations in the gayer World, who are in preſent Poſſeſſion of theſe ſeveral Characters; together with an Account of thoſe who unfortunately pretend to 'em. I ſhall begin with him we uſually call a *Gentleman*, or Man of Converſation. It is generally thought, That Warmth of Imagination, quick Reliſh of Pleaſure, and a Manner of becoming it, are the moſt eſſential Qualities for forming this Sort of Man. But any one that is much in Company will obſerve, That the Height of good Breeding is ſhown rather in never giving Offence, than in doing obliging Things. Thus, he that never ſhocks you, tho' he is ſeldom entertaining, is more likely to keep your Favour, than he who often entertains, and ſometimes diſpleaſes you. The moſt neceſſary Talent therefore in a Man of Converſation, which is what we ordinarily intend by a Fine Gentleman, is a good Judgment. He that has this in Perfection, is Maſter of his Companion without letting him ſee it, and has the ſame Advantage over Men of any other Qualifications whatſoever, as one that can ſee would have over a blind Man of Ten times his Strength. This is what makes *Sophronius* the Darling of all who converſe with him, and the moſt Powerful with his Acquaintance of any Man in Town. By the Light of this Faculty, he acts with great Eaſe and Freedom among the Men of Pleaſure, and acquits himſelf with Skill and Diſpatch among the Men of Buſineſs. This he performs with ſo much Succeſs, that, with as much Diſcretion in Life as any Man ever had, he neither is, nor appears, Cunning. But as he does a good Office, if he ever does it, with Readineſs and Alacrity; ſo he denies what he does not care to engage in, in a Manner that convinces you, that you ought not to have ask'd it. His Judgment is ſo good and unerring, and that accompanied with ſo chearful a Spirit, that his Converſation is a continual Feaſt, at which he helps ſome, and is help'd by others, in ſuch a Manner, that the Equality of Society is perfectly kept up, and every Man obliges as much as he is oblig'd: For it is the greateſt and juſteſt Skill in a Man of Superior Underſtanding, to know how to be on a Level with his Companions. This ſweet Diſpoſition runs through all the Actions of *Sophronius*, and makes his Company deſir'd by Women, without being envy'd by Men. *Sophronius* would be as juſt as he is, if there were no Law; and would be as diſcreet as he is, if there were no ſuch Thing as Calumny.

In Imitation of this agreeable Being, is made that Animal we call a *Pretty Fellow*; who being juſt able to find out, That what makes *Sophronius* acceptable, is a Natural Behaviour; in order to the ſame Reputation, makes his own an Artificial one. *Jack Dimple* is his perfect Mimick, which makes him of Courſe the moſt unlike him of all Men living. *Sophronius* juſt now paſs'd into the inner Room directly forward: *Jack* comes as faſt after as he can for the Right and Left Looking-glaſs, in which he had but juſt approv'd himſelf by a Nod at each Glaſs, and march'd on. He will meditate within for Half an Hour, 'till he thinks he is not careleſs enough in his Air, and come back to the Mirrour to recollect his Forgetfulneſs.

Will's Coffee-houſe, May 27.

This Night was acted the Comedy, called, *The Fox*; but I wonder the Modern Writers do not uſe their Intereſt in the Houſe to ſuppreſs ſuch Repreſentations. A Man that has been at this, will hardly like any other Play during the Seaſon: Therefore I humbly move, That the Writings, as well as Dreſſes, of the laſt Age, ſhould give way to the preſent Faſhion. We are come into a good Method enough (if we were not interrupted in our Mirth by ſuch an Apparition as a Play of *Johnſon's*) to be entertain'd at more Eaſe, both to the Spectator and the Writer, than in the Days of Old. It is no Difficulty to get Hats, and Swords, and Wigs, and Shoes, and every Thing elſe, from the Shops in Town, and make a Man ſhow himſelf by his Habit, without more ado, to be a Counſellor, a Fop, a Courtier, or a Citizen, without being oblig'd to make thoſe Characters talk in different Dialects to be diſtinguiſh'd from each other. This is certainly the ſureſt and beſt Way of Writing: But ſuch a Play as this makes a Man for a Month after over-run with Criticiſm, and enquire, What every man on the Stage ſaid? What had ſuch a one to do to meddle with ſuch a Thing? How came t'other, who was bred after ſuch a Manner, to ſpeak ſo like a Man converſant among a different People? Theſe Queſtions rob us of all our Pleaſure; for at this Rate, no one Sentence in a Play ſhould be ſpoken by any one Character, which could poſſibly enter into the Head of any other Man repreſented in it; but every Sentiment ſhould be peculiar to him only who utters it. Laborious *Ben's* Works will bear this Sort of Inquiſition; but if the preſent Writers were thus examin'd, and the Offences againſt this Rule cut out, few Plays would be long enough for the whole Evening's Entertainment. But I don't know how they did in thoſe old Times: This ſame *Ben Johnſon* has made every one's Paſſion in this Play be towards Money, and yet not one of them expreſſes that Deſire, or goes about obtaining it, in any Way but what is peculiar to him only: One ſacrifices his Wife, another his Profeſſion, another his Poſterity, from the ſame Motive; but their Characters are kept ſo skilfully a-part, that it ſeems prodigious, their Diſcourſes ſhould riſe from the Invention of the ſame Author. But the Poets are a Neſt of Hornets, and I'll drive theſe Thoughts no farther, but muſt mention ſome hard Treatment I am like to meet with from my Brother Writers. I am credibly inform'd, that the Author of a Play, call'd, *Love in a Hollow Tree*, has made ſome Remarks upon my late Diſcourſe on *The Naked Truth*. I cannot blame any Gentleman for writing againſt any Error; it is for the Good of the learned World. But I would have the Thing fairly between us Two, and not under the Protection of Patrons: But my Intelligence is, that he has dedicated his Treatiſe to the Honourable Mr. *Ed----d H----rd.*

From my own Apartment, May 27.

To Iſaac Bickerſtaff *Eſq;*

SIR, York, May 16. 1709.

BEing convinc'd, as the whole World is, how infallible your Predictions are, and having the Honour to be your near Relation, of the Staffian *Family, I was under great Concern at one of your Predictions relating to your ſelf, wherein you foretold your own Death to happen on the* 17*th Inſtant, unleſs it were prevented by the Aſſiſtance of well diſpos'd People: I have therefore prevail'd on my own Modeſty to ſend you a Piece of News, which may ſerve inſtead of* Goddard's Drops, *to keep you alive for Two Days, till Nature be able to recover it ſelf, or till you meet with ſome better Help from other Hands. Therefore, without further Ceremony, I will go on to relate a ſingular Adventure juſt happen'd in the Place where I am writing, wherein it may be highly uſeful for the Publick to be inform'd.*

Three

Three young Ladies of our Town were on Saturday *laſt indicted for* Witchcraft. *The Witneſſes againſt the Firſt depos'd upon Oath before Juſtice* Bindover, *That ſhe kept Spirits lock'd up in Veſſels, which ſometimes appear'd in Flames of blue Fire; That ſhe us'd Magical Herbs, with ſome of which ſhe drew in Hundreds of Men daily to her, who went out from her Preſence all enflam'd, their Mouths parch'd, and a hot Steam iſſuing from them, attended with a grievous Stench; That many of the ſaid Men were by the Force of that Herb metamorphos'd into Swine, and lay wallowing in the Kennels for Twenty four Hours, before they could reaſſume their Shapes or their Senſes. It was prov'd againſt the Second, That ſhe cut off by Night the Limbs from dead Bodies that were hang'd, and was ſeen to dig Holes in the Ground, to mutter ſome conjuring Words, and bury Pieces of the Fleſh, after the uſual Manner of Witches. The Third was accus'd for a notorious Piece of Sorcery, long practis'd by Hags, of molding up Pieces of Dough into the Shapes of Men, Women, and Children; then heating them at a gentle Fire, which had a Sympathetick Power to torment the Bowels of thoſe in the Neighbourhood.*

This was the Sum of what was objected againſt the Three Ladies, who indeed had nothing to ſay in their own Defence, but downright denying the Facts, which is like to avail very little, when they come upon their Tryals.

But the Parſon of our Pariſh, a ſtrange refractory Man, will believe nothing of all this; ſo that the whole Town cries out, Shame! That one of his Coat ſhould be ſuch an Atheiſt! *And deſign to complain of him to the Biſhop. He goes about very odly to ſolve the Matter. He ſuppoſes, That the Firſt of theſe Ladies keeping a Brandy and Tobacco Shop, the Fellows went out ſmoaking, and got drunk towards Evening, and made themſelves Beaſts. He ſays, The Second is a Butcher's Daughter, and ſometimes brings a Quarter of Mutton from the Slaughter-houſe over Night againſt a Market-Day, and once buried a Bit of Beef in the Ground, as a known Receipt to cure Warts on her Hands. The Parſon affirms, That the Third ſells Gingerbread, which, to pleaſe the Children, ſhe is forc'd to ſtamp with Images before 'tis bak'd; and if it burns their Guts, 'tis becauſe they eat too much, or do not drink after it.*

Theſe are the Anſwers he gives to ſolve this wonderful Phenomenon; *upon which I ſhall not animadvert, but leave it among Philoſophers: And ſo wiſhing you all Succeſs in your Undertakings for the Amendment of the World, I remain,* Dear Couſin,

Your moſt Affectionate Kinſman,

and Humble Servant,

Ephraim Bedſtaff.

P.S. Thoſe who were condemn'd to Death among the *Athenians*, were oblig'd to take a Doſe of Poiſon, which made them die upwards, ſeizing firſt upon their Feet, making them cold and inſenſible, and ſo aſcending gradually, 'till it reach'd the Vital Parts. I believe your Death, which you foretold ſhould happen on the 17th Inſtant, will fall out the ſame Way, and has begun ſome time, and makes Progreſs daily. The lower Part of you, that is, the *Advertiſements*, is dead; and theſe have riſen for theſe Ten Days laſt paſt, ſo that they now take up almoſt a whole Paragraph. Pray, Sir, do your Endeavour to drive this Diſtemper as much as poſſible to the extreme Parts, and keep it there, as wiſe Folks do the Gout; for if it once gets into your Stomach, it will ſoon fly up into your Head, and you are a dead Man.

St. James's Coffee-houſe, May 27.

We hear from *Leghorn*, That Sir *Edward Whitaker*, with 5 Men of War, 4 Tranſports, and 2 Fireſhips, was arriv'd at that Port, and Admiral *Bing* was ſuddenly expected. Their Squadrons being join'd, they deſign to ſail directly for *Final*, to tranſport the Reinforcements lodg'd in thoſe Parts to *Barcelona*.

They write from *Milan*, That Count *Thaun* arriv'd there on the 16th Inſtant, *N. S.* and proceeded on his Journey to *Turin* on the 21ſt, in order to concert ſuch Meaſures with his Royal Highneſs, as ſhall appear neceſſary for the Operations of the enſuing Campagne.

The General Diet of the Cantons of *Swiſſerland* being aſſembled at *Baden* on the 14th Inſtant, 'tis ſuppos'd that the Popiſh Cantons, conſidering the preſent Situation of Affairs, will be inclin'd to compoſe the Differences relating to the Affair of *Tockenburg*. Advices from *Dauphine* ſay, That the Troops of the Duke of *Savoy* began already to appear in thoſe Valleys, whereof he made himſelf Maſter the laſt Year; and that the Duke of *Berwick* apply'd himſelf with all imaginable Diligence to ſecure the Paſſes of the Mountains, by ordering Intrenchments to be made towards *Briançon*, *Tourneau*, and the Valley of *Queiras*. That General has alſo been at *Marſeilles* and *Thoulon*, to haſten the Tranſportation of the Corn and Proviſions deſign'd for his Army.

Letters from *Vienna*, bearing Date *May* 23. *N. S.* import, That the Cardinal of *Saxe-Zeits* and the Prince of *Lichtenſtein* are preparing to ſet out for *Presburg*, to aſſiſt at the Diet of the States of *Hungary*, which is to be aſſembled at that Place on the 25th of this Month. General *Heiſter* will ſhortly appear at the Head of his Army at *Trentſchin*, which Place is appointed for the general Rendezvous of the Imperial Forces in *Hungary*; from whence he will advance to lay Siege to *Newhauſel*: In the mean Time, Reinforcements, with a great Train of Artillery, are marching the ſame Way: The King of *Denmark* arriv'd on the 10th Inſtant at *Inſpruck*, and on the 26th at *Dreſden*, under a Triple Diſcharge of the Artillery of that Place; but his Majeſty refus'd the Ceremonies of a Publick Entry.

Our Letters from the *Upper Rhine* ſay, That the Imperial Army began to form it ſelf at *Etlingen*; where the reſpective Deputies of the Elector Palatine, the Prince of *Baden Durlach*, the Biſhoprick of *Spires*, *&c.* were aſſembled, and had taken the neceſſary Meaſures for the Proviſion of Forage, the Security of the Country againſt the Incurſions of the Enemy, and laying a Bridge over the *Rhine*. Several Veſſels laden with Corn are daily paſſing before *Francfort* for the *Lower Rhine*.

Letters from *Poland* inform us, That a Detachment of *Muſcovite* Cavalry, under the Command of General *Infland*, had joined the Confederate Army; and the Infantry, commanded by General *Goltz*, was expected to come up within few Days. Theſe Succours will amount to 20000 Men.

Our laſt Advices from the *Hague*, dated *June* the 4th, ſay, That they expected a Courier from the *French* Court with the Ratification of the Preliminaries that Night or the Day following. His Grace the Duke of *Marlborough* will ſet out for *Bruſſels* on *Wedneſday* or *Thurſday* next, if the Diſpatches which are expected from *Paris* don't alter his Reſolutions. Letters from *Majorca* confirm the Honourable Capitulation of the Caſtle of *Alicant*, and alſo the Death of the Governor Major-General *Richards*, Colonel *Sibourg*, and Major *Vignolles*, who were all bury'd in the Ruins of that Place, by the ſpringing of their great Mine, which did, it ſeems, more Execution than was reported. Monſieur *Torcy* paſs'd through *Mons* in his Return, and had there a long Conference with the Elector of *Bavaria*; after which that Prince ſpoke publickly of the Treatment he had had from *France* with the utmoſt Indignation.

Any Perſon that ſhall come publickly abroad in a fantaſtical Habit, contrary to the preſent Mode and Faſhion, except Don Diego Diſmallo, *or any other out of Poverty, ſhall have his Name and Dreſs inſerted in our next.*

N. B. *Mr.* How'd'call *is deſir'd to leave off thoſe Buttons.*

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